

THE GOLD STANDARD HALLMARK OF B&H

The famous gold pack now carries four distinctive symbols on its inner-foil, forming a Hallmark.

Hallmarks are used the world over to authenticate the quality of precious metals like gold.

Benson & Hedges is now guaranteed by the Gold Standard Hallmark which appears on every pack of your favourite cigarette.

Each of the symbols within the hallmark tells a particular story.

දුම කොළ පැකට් මත පහත සලකුණු හතරක් පෙන්වනු ලබයි. එමගින් සහතික කරනු ලබන්නේ සුදුසු තත්ත්වයේ සහතික කරනු ලබන බවයි.

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The Leaf (දුමකොළය)...

...is to remind you that each and every leaf is individually hand-selected.

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The unique Benson & Hedges Hallmark

An example of BAT's advertising campaign in Sri Lanka to promote its Benson & Hedges brand.

impress the brand's target audience about "quality" and "heritage" of the product. In a huge sales push—it can hardly have been to capture brand share from a rival—CTC, BAT's local subsidiary, offered rewards to retailers for their performance in a new "Sea of Fortune" sales campaign. Clearly aimed at young males, the top prize for those who bought the new packs was a 175 cc Yamaha trail motorcycle, with 75 000 other instant gifts such as camping sets, binoculars, and watches for runners up. Retailers' performance was evaluated once a week over four weeks, and those receiving good scores for product visibility, merchandising prominence, and other aspects of the campaign were given a "gift pack" containing a small B&H scanner radio together with the inevitable B&H T shirt.

If "Sea of Fortune" was male oriented, BAT has not forgotten young females. It was BAT, of course, whose sales representatives in gold saris were more than generous in their promotion of B&H cigarettes to young female visitors in a night club in Sri Lanka as long ago as 1998 (see Seimon T & Mehl GL. Strategic marketing of cigarettes to young people in Sri Lanka: "Go ahead – I want to see you smoke it now". *Tobacco Control* 1998;7:429–33). But since then, BAT has climbed on the "We've changed" bandwagon, claiming a new, scrupulously careful approach to marketing, backing it up with tons of glossy reports on social responsibility. In particular, it might have been expected to show restraint in its recent dealings with a population whose women have traditionally been non-smokers. But it hasn't changed at all. Once again, it's business as usual.

In recent months, beautiful young Swedish girls in glamorous dresses have been seen moving around nightclubs in the capital, Colombo, offering free Benson & Hedges cigarettes to young people. One journalist reported that when asked who had hired them, the young women replied that it was the local tobacco company, and that their brief was to target young people, especially girls. Their assignment was to include visits to almost all the country's nightclubs. When asked for follow up contact details, they politely refused, but perhaps remembering a briefing on industry protocol, added that they were merely trying to make the smokers switch brands.

In addition, at around the same time there were reports of a more unusual and sinister activity from Majestic City, a large shopping complex in Colombo. Once again they featured attractive women in glamorous clothes, though this time they were not giving out cigarettes, just smoking them. Health advocates are convinced they were paid solely to parade around the shopping centre to demonstrate that attractive, stylish young women now smoke. The smoking women all appeared to be foreigners, and this together with their strikingly attractive appearance ensured that they were well noticed.

For corporate self promotion, BAT has been appropriating one of the country's most famous artists, George Keyt (1901 – 1993), once described by a leading Indian art critic as "One of the few giants of the New Asia". Revered by several generations, his work is to be found, among other places, in temples around the country. What better reputation to exploit, then, for a tobacco

company? Not surprisingly, trustees of the George Keyt Foundation include CTC's chairman and its director of legal affairs. In September the foundation held exhibitions of the work of young artists, part sponsored by CTC, and opened by the country's enterprise and industry minister. CTC launched a major advertising campaign to publicise the company's altruism, though not forgetting to use B&H colours. It is thought the ads cost significantly more than the sponsorship itself.

In the light of all this, it seems very unlikely that Sri Lanka will follow up its early FCTC ratification with effective action. Even if the government tries, BAT has dug itself in well, and can look forward to many more happy trips to the bank with its brimming purse of gold.

World: how Formula One swerved round health

On the same day that Formula One (F1) strategies to undermine tobacco control legislation were discussed at the World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Helsinki, news agencies reported that the Canadian Grand Prix was to be dropped from the 2004 calendar. F1 boss



Canada: A bilingual postcard created by Carte Blanche, a communication marketing agency in Montreal, pre-addressed to Bernie Ecclestone for Canadians to send to the Formula One boss to protest against the loss of Canada's top motor race. In all, 108 000 cards were distributed by the Pop Media network, and several newspapers ran ads to build awareness and support for the campaign. On the back of the card was a message asking Ecclestone whether F1 was as addicted to the tobacco industry as are billions to cigarettes, and demanding that he reconsider his sponsorship policy.

Bernie Ecclestone insisted that tobacco advertising was the sole reason for the decision. "Our problem is quite simple. The Formula One teams with tobacco-related sponsorship lose part of their revenue when a certain percentage of the events ban tobacco sponsorship." This was the reason the Belgian Grand Prix was not included in the 2003 calendar, he added.

In Belgium a law was passed in 1997 banning all tobacco advertising and sponsorship from 1 January 1999 (including F1 sponsorship). Since January 1997, there have been five attempts in the Belgian parliament (between November 1997 and December 2002) to overturn the law, which all failed. However, another attempt last July was successful for the F1 lobby and resulted in a delay of the enforcement of the ban on tobacco sponsorship of international events such as F1 until July 2005. One characteristic of the Belgian Grand Prix is that the organiser is Ecclestone. He controls the company Spa Activités, which is mandated by F1's governing body, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), to organise the Belgian Grand Prix in Spa Francorchamps.

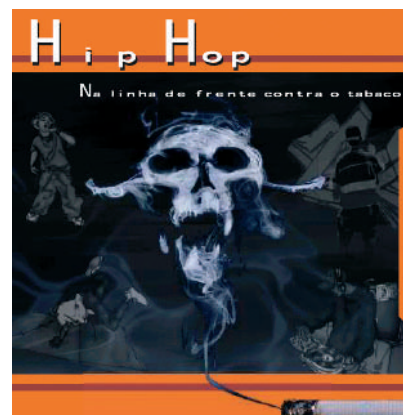
The Ecclestone principle is simple: the profits for organising the Belgian Grand Prix are for Ecclestone, and the costs for maintaining the circuit are for the government of the Walloon region. Since 1977 the Walloon region invested some €44 million (US\$50 million) in the circuit at Francorchamps. It may be prestigious to organise a Grand Prix, but it is a myth to believe that it is an economic success story for the region (at least in Belgium).

It is a well known tobacco industry strategy to use exemptions for F1 tobacco sponsorship as a way to undermine tobacco control legislation in different countries around the world. So far the FIA has been successful with Chancellor Kohl of Germany in 1997, with Prime Minister Prodi of Italy in 1997, with the UK Labour government

in 1997 and 2002, and with Brazil and Belgium in 2003. There are no reasons to believe that the FIA will stop this kind of tobacco friendly lobbying activity in October 2006, despite what they promised in October 2000.

The most startling evidence of the way FIA chief Bernie Ecclestone operates was revealed when he was tricked by a Canadian radio prankster last August into thinking that he was talking to Canada's prime minister, Jean Chretien. Ecclestone was willing to consider offering a job to the Canadian PM, if Chretien could persuade the parliament to agree with an exemption for tobacco advertisement at the Canadian Grand Prix. Marc-Antoine Audette (the radio personality posing as Prime Minister Jean Chretien): "It's simple, in November 2003 I'm going to retire and maybe let's say one year after that we could work together." Ecclestone: "That would be nice. I'm sure..." Audette: "I'm sure I can convince parliament to maybe soften a little bit the loss." Ecclestone: "Super, super, super, super, nine o'clock Wednesday morning I'll call you." [The interview can be heard at: http://www.ckoi.com/ckoi2/meilleurs_moments.php and a transcript found on the same site.]

Ecclestone loves to speak to prime ministers and to put governments under pressure. In an interview with a Belgian newspaper, he said: "A prime minister who is not interested in Formula One is an idiot." In September, Ecclestone attended a ceremony in Istanbul, Turkey, to celebrate the start of construction of the new F1 circuit in the presence of the prime minister, Mr Tayyip Erdogan. The land on which the construction is taking place is legally



Brazil: In Rio de Janeiro City, a joint programme between state and non-governmental organisations has brought youth-friendly hip-hop music to bear in the fight against youth smoking. This CD, whose title means "Hip-hop in the frontline against tobacco", features music on tobacco themes by young composers. It has been distributed to all municipalities of Rio de Janeiro state for playing on community radio stations.

designated as a forest area and a water collection basin for Istanbul's drinking water, covered by a law that strictly bans construction.

Protests were staged by environmentalists, the local chambers of architects, forest engineers, city planners, and agricultural engineers, and, of course, medical and other health groups, who said that the scheme breached environmental protection regulations on several counts. The prime minister retorted that more trees would be planted in the area, and that organisations that had not planted trees (meaning environmental groups) had no right to criticise the project.

Consultants to the prime minister confessed that the F1 organisers expli-



Turkey's prime minister, Mr Tayyip Erdogan, at the opening ceremony of the new Formula One circuit in Istanbul. F1 organisers told the government that they would hold the race in Turkey only if tobacco sponsorship was allowed.



One of several features on the British Grand Prix extolling the Jordan team, sponsored by Benson & Hedges (B&H) cigarettes, which appeared in the August edition of the men's magazine Maxim.

citly told the government that they would organise the race in Turkey only if tobacco sponsorship were allowed. The project will cost the Turkish government an estimated US\$100 million and the first Grand Prix race is due to take place in 2005. No doubt Turkey, and the other new Grand Prix countries such as China and Bahrain, will be requested to amend their tobacco control legislation.

Under the terms of the FCTC all countries signing up to the treaty are required to ban tobacco advertising and sponsorship if such a measure is allowed under their constitution. When the FCTC comes into force, it will be the end of the FIA's ability to force countries to make a choice between F1 and effective public health law. There will no longer be any need for Bernie Ecclestone to bother prime ministers around the world. Perhaps it's now up to the Canadian prime minister to offer Ecclestone a new job.

As this article went to press, it appeared that Ecclestone had not been successful this time. The Canadian Grand Prix was reinstated in the F1 calendar, despite the refusal of the Canadian government to amend the law.

LUK JOOSSENS

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UK: getaway cars?

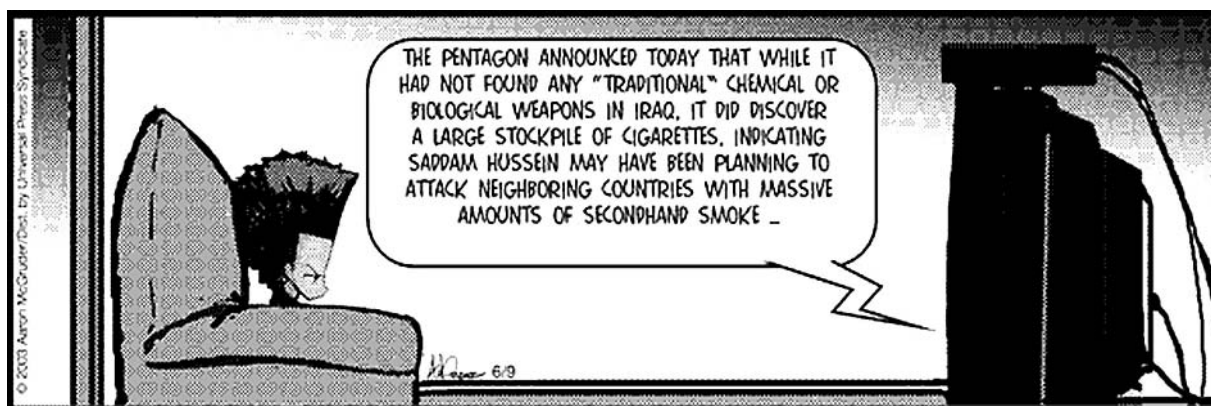
Despite all newspaper, magazine, and billboard advertising of tobacco products having been banned in the UK since last February, several features on the British Grand Prix extolling the Jordan team, sponsored by Benson & Hedges (B&H) cigarettes, appeared in the August edition of the men's magazine *Maxim*. Each double page spread of the eight page piece bore the heading, "Maxim F1 special in association with Benson & Hedges Jordan", with a B&H logo above a panel which itself contained two more, larger B&H logos at top and bottom. Altogether, the eight pages contained 40 B&H logos. Enquiries revealed the apparent involvement of an advertising agency working on behalf of Gallaher, makers of B&H in the UK. A formal complaint was made to trading standards officers by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), contending that the placing of the articles was in breach of the ad ban, though Formula One's exemption from the ban on tobacco sponsorship until 2005 may be cited in defence. ASH says the case illustrates how loopholes or exceptions to any ad ban will be exploited to the full, and that only a total ban, rigorously enforced, can stop tobacco promotion.

Myanmar: BAT creates a stink

BAT inadvertently created a bad smell in certain official circles in the USA recently when what appears to be an attempt to help Myanmar (Burma) increase its foreign currency earnings went wrong. BAT has been under fire from human rights campaigners and some governments on the grounds that its continued business partnerships with the military regime in Myanmar discourage reform. However, the background to the latest problem was distinctly fishy.

BAT is thought to have established relationships with local exporters to win foreign currency to buy raw materials for its Rangoon plant, though it insisted it had no direct connection with fish or any other kind of foodstuffs. Nevertheless, a report from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last December came to light recently showing that a shipment stamped with the name of BAT's subsidiary Rothmans of Pall Mall contained a "filthy, putrid or decomposed substance...unfit for human consumption". Nothing new there, you may think; the FDA must simply have opened some of the cigarettes. But the packing cases contained not cigarettes, but frozen, peeled shrimps.

The lighter side



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